

and that it was only a question of months as to when mass should be said again in every village church ; but then on the following Sunday the cobbler's voice had been louder than all in the metrical psalm, and on the Monday he had paid a morning visit to the Rectory to satisfy himself on the doctrine of Justification, and had gone again, praising God and not Our Lady, for the godly advice received.

But again, three years back, just before Mr. Dent had come to the place, there had been a solemn burning on the village-green of all such muniments of superstition as had not been previously hidden by the priest and Sir Nicholas ; and in the rejoicings that accompanied this return to pure religion practically the whole agricultural population had joined. Some Justices had ridden over from East Grinstead to direct this rustic reformation, and had reported favourably to the new Rector on his arrival of the zeal of his flock. The great Rood, they told him, with SS. Mary and John, four great massy angels, the statue of St. Christopher, the Vernacle, a brocade set of mass vestments and a purple cope, had perished in the flames, and there had been no lack of hands to carry faggots ; and now the Rector found it difficult to reconcile the zeal of his parishioners (which indeed he privately regretted) with the sudden and unexpected lapses into superstition, such as was Mr. Martin's gratitude to Our Lady, and others of which he had had experience.

As regards the secular politics of the outside world, Great Keynes took but little interest. It was far more a matter of concern whether mass or morning prayer was performed on Sunday, than whether a German bridegroom could be found for Elizabeth, or whether she would marry the Duke of Anjou ; and more important than either were the infinitesimal details of domestic life. Whether Mary was guilty or not, whether her supporters were rising, whether the shadow of Spain chilled the hearts of men in London whose affair it was to look after such things ; yet the cows must be milked, and the children washed, and the falcons fed ; and it was these things that formed the foreground of life, whether the sky were stormy or sunlit.

And so, as the autumn of '69 crept over the woods in